

MAD RUSH OF BOOMERS.

THOUSANDS SEEK HOMES IN THE CHEROKEE STRIP.

At the firing of a Pistol 200,000 Homesteaders Dart Across the Line and Enter the Wild Race for the Choice Locations—Many Casualties—Mushroom Cities.

A dispatch from Guthrie, Oklahoma, says: A rising sun looked down upon six million acres of virgin soil devoid of a single inhabitant. In setting it cast its rays over a hundred thousand established homes. Between the rising and setting a half score cities had been born. Texans, Kansans, Missourians, Arkansians, white men, black men and red men, all played a part.

Two hundred thousand people camped upon the border of the land at night, and in the morning trains brought many thousands more. A large force of clerks had registered everybody in line, and in the morning newcomers had no trouble in getting certificates.

The greatest number of certificates issued at any one place on the southern line of the strip was 30,000 at Orlando. Honesty came next with close to 30,000, and Stillwater with 17,000.

The largest crowd was at Orlando, and four-fifths of the 30,000 people massed there were bound for Perry, the county seat of Perry county, which is the largest city in all Oklahoma.

The scene on the border during the night before the rush was one long to be remembered. The housepots of prairie schooners, fires of camping boomers and tethered horses gave the scene a military aspect. There was considerable confusion early in the evening, caused by many new arrivals, who were seeking advantageous places for the race.

Those who have been waiting on the border for days looked upon newcomers as interlopers, and would not give way one inch of their advantage. There was much ill-feeling as a consequence, and the line in places serious trouble was narrowly avoided.

Just at the same moment, at high noon, the thousands in railway trains, on foot, in wagons, on ponies, and on horseback, swept over the line in one mad, wild rush, scattering over the country like a cloud of grasshoppers. They ran as though for life, over gullies and ridges, and the wonder was that hundreds were not killed.

It was an American gathering and acted as a shock upon itself. The signal for the start at every place was the firing of the guns of the soldiers and deputy marshals.

The greatest struggle of the day took place in the rush of ten thousand people attempting to get aboard the first train, which could carry but a few over the line. The line was crowded with people who had obeyed Secretary Smith's order to wait upon the line for the train were left standing there until the third train came along, and lost all chance of getting any property.

When the trains pulled up to the line the terrible struggle began. Women had their clothes torn off and were trampled under the hoofs of the horses. The ground was laid with blood, and the great crowd fought and pulled, shouted, and struggled like so many wild animals. At last the trains were filled, and when they pulled out many badly injured people were left behind.

The first train to Perry found the best lots taken by "sooners" and fast horsemen, and by the time the second train arrived most of the town site was pre-empted. Still thousands of people continued coming, and by 3 o'clock 30,000 people were there.

Before night business houses were doing business, and the inhabitants of the new town were talking about electing city officers. The people on the first train secured residence lots in the outskirts, but those upon the second and third secured nothing.

The race between the trains and horsemen was an exciting one, with the odds in favor of the horsemen. The first horseman to reach Perry from the line was W. H. Ramsey, of Oklahoma, Kan., and he secured a town lot. He says hundreds of "sooners" were actually walking into the town site before the west.

Carl Krieg, of Guthrie, reached the Land Office first and filed his registration at 12.30, and by 1 o'clock 600 were in line there. At 1.45 the first train was put up by L. B. Lyman, of Guthrie, and at 1.50 the Valley Bank was ready to do business; the Darlington Miller Lumber Company opening their yards five minutes later.

The old stage route from the line to Perry, which was followed by most of the horsemen, was a wagon, had several very bad crossings, and at one gulch twenty vehicles were wrecked. The Rev. John H. Angier, of Mulhall, was badly injured.

At Mulhall the same place was fatally crushed by a horse falling upon him. One woman was injured in falling from a moving train. A cowboy from Texas fell from his horse, shot through the head, and there is no clue as to who fired the shot. The trail is lined with broken-down wagons and buggies and a hundred dead horses are scattered here and there.

At Perry the Government was in a state of alarm. The water in the Government wells was strong with salt, yet the people drank them dry in forty minutes.

At Stillwater the crowd numbered about 20,000, most of whom were from the same country and scattered. One man was killed there and several badly injured.

At Hennessy about 12,000 people were massed, three-fourths of them for the town site of Enid, and the same scene was enacted as at Perry. One man is reported shot over a town lot quarrel, and one woman injured by falling from a train. R. H. Smith, of Tulsa, Va., was killed by a bicycle and secured a fine claim against the town site, and ten other bicyclists got lots.

At Hawnwell the craze to register and enter the strip had affected many who never expected to perfect a title to a homestead claim, and hundreds, discouraged by the crowds ahead of them, gave over the attempt to despair. What was left, however, was enough to form an imposing army, which began to stretch itself as if in battle array for miles on both sides of the registration booth as the dawn began to break.

The line was a motley assemblage of prairie schooners, buckboards, buggies, spring wagons and nondescript vehicles, with a few bicycles at conspicuous places.

On some of the running gear, strange and uncouth structures were built, and a few of these were driven by friends or relatives of mounted men, who proposed to get their claims by hard riding and let their commissary department follow along as best it could.

The favorite equipment of the horseman was a big tin can, a blanket, a sack, a sack with a day or two's rations, and a rifle, which was used upon a short staff. The usual mount was a small, but hardy, cow pony, selected more for staying qualities than for speed.

There was suffering on the day after on the Cherokee Strip. Many casualties were reported from exposure and prairie fires. Elizabeth Osborne, a woman of 60, of Enid, Mo., was burned to death. She and her husband made the race for a claim in a buggy. In the valleys of Duck Creek, where they intended to settle, the prairie fire came sweeping after them. Every one who tried to escape was caught by the flames.

Osborne and broke it. Osborne jumped out, turned his team loose, and ran for the creek. Mrs. Osborne started to follow, but became

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Mr. Cochran made a full confession to Chief Davidson and Mr. Preston, who had come over from Washington. He said that for the past eight or ten years he has been abstracting bullion bars from the vault. The bars were of the original weight of 35.4739 grams, and he had been abstracting them from the vault.

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